



400 R STREET, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814-6200



### **DRAFT MINUTES**

Task Force on Culturally and Linguistically  
Competent Physicians and Dentists  
Salinas Community Center, Santa Lucia Room  
940 N. Main Street, Salinas, California 93906  
December 10, 2001  
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

#### **Task Force Members Present:**

Kathleen Hamilton, Director of Department of Consumer Affairs, Co-Chair  
Ron Joseph, Executive Director, Medical Board of California  
Maximiliano Cuevas, M.D., Executive Director, Clinicas de Salud Del Valle de Salinas  
Eva Vasquez-Camacho, United Farm Workers

#### **Staff Members Present:**

Kristy Wiese, Assistant Deputy Director, Department of Consumer Affairs  
Jean Iacino, Special Assistant to the Director, Department of Health Services

#### **Call to Order:**

Kathleen Hamilton, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. Noticing the absence of a quorum, the Task Force convened as a Subcommittee. All members present introduced themselves. Professional interpreters were available for non-English speakers.

#### **Informational Presentations by Invited Speakers Regarding Access to Culturally and Linguistically Competent Care in the Local Community:**

Director Hamilton provided an overview of the Task Force. Director Hamilton advised that an essential task for the Task Force was to conduct hearings throughout the state to solicit testimony and discussion regarding the need to provide ethically and linguistically diverse practitioners to serve in the underserved communities. The Task Force will submit a final report for recommendations to the Legislature in 2003.

Director Hamilton requested that Mr. Joseph provide a status report on the recent visit to Mexico convened by the Senate Business and Professions Committee. Mr. Joseph stated the trip included a tour of two medical training facilities in Mexico, the National University in Mexico City and the Autonomous University of Guadalajara Medical School. He advised that the purpose of the trip was to compare the medical education attained in Mexico with the medical education received in the U.S. Mr. Joseph also stated that the Guadalajara Medical School operates as a medical licensure pathway school to students in Mexico as well as the U.S. Graduates from Guadalajara Medical School come to the United States and complete a

fifth year of medical education prior to entering into a U.S. residency program in a program known as the "Fifth Pathway".

Alonzo Gonzalez, Director of the Mobile Health Center, Appolonia Foundation for Children's Dental Health, advised that he oversees two dental programs in Monterey County that promote prevention and education services for children who reside in isolated, rural, low income and farm worker communities who otherwise may not have access to dental services. He advised that the mobile centers are comprised of two large mobile homes that are rotated throughout various schools in the district. Mr. Gonzalez stated a common problem that he encounters is early childhood tooth decay. He felt that the state could assist these efforts by providing supportive programs that would mandate dentists serve five-years in underserved areas upon graduation and offer a loan forgiveness loan to dentists who volunteer to work in underserved communities.

Director Hamilton asked Mr. Gonzalez to share his thoughts on what core relationships he has developed in the community to enable him to attract linguistically and culturally competent dentists.

Mr. Gonzalez responded that he works to develop relationships to a culturally diverse group of dentists in the community and posts available jobs advertising for culturally and linguistically competent candidates.

Ms. Vasquez-Camacho asked Mr. Gonzalez does he tailor his services to the needs of his patients.

Mr. Gonzalez responded that the program's goal is that the mobile centers avail their services as much as possible. Since, typical business hours conflict with the schedule of migrant workers, the mobile clinic is open during the evenings and on weekends.

Dr. Cuevas asked how the dental clinics cared for the patients who don't speak English and the dilemma of patient referrals for family members who don't speak the language.

Mr. Gonzalez replied that the job descriptions reflect that the job requires a significant portion of translation. He also indicated that those hired are bilingual with a willingness to work with the underserved population.

Mr. Joseph inquired if finding culturally and linguistically competent dentists posed difficulties. Mr. Gonzalez responded that yes, it is difficult to recruit dentists and more so, if you impose the desire that they are bilingual or culturally competent.

Director Hamilton asked what the mobile service has done to outreach to school faculty and whether or not a parent has to accompany their children for the dental visits.

Mr. Gonzalez advised that parents are not required to accompany their children when the mobile clinic goes to their schools.

Ms. Vasquez-Camacho asked Mr. Gonzalez if he experienced high turnover in retaining bilingual and bicultural employees. He responded no, because he employs reliable employees.

Ms. Iacino asked Mr. Gonzalez how long the mobile centers reside at an individual school site. Mr. Gonzalez responded that he visits each site for approximately six to eight weeks out of the school year.

Maria Giuriato, Monterey County Department of Social Services Community Action Agency, stated her agency caters specifically to a significantly large farm worker community. She informed the Task Force that Monterey County conducted a Farm Worker Housing and Health Needs Assessment Study that included a forty-five minute interview with farm workers to assess their needs for health and social services. The County Board of Supervisors in Monterey County recognized the need to address the Latino farm workers lack of adequate health care as well as inadequate housing.

Ms. Giuriato recommended:

1. Requiring a foreign language for medical and dental students and encouraging that they practice in a rural or impoverished community for two to five years.
2. Provide state incentives for physicians and dentists who work in rural communities in the form of paying for their housing or a portion of their education.
3. Promote educational and mentoring programs at an early age that encourage youths to consider careers in the healthcare field.
4. Facilitate dialogue with the American Dental Society and American Medical Association encouraging physicians and dentists to work with farm workers and in medically underserved areas.

Director Hamilton asked if there were opportunities for young people to do volunteer work with community service programs and medical service programs to gain experience in the healthcare field.

Ms. Giuriato stated she is currently working with six students from Monterey County and the University of California State Monterey Bay concentrating on farm worker issues as well as homeless programs.

Director Hamilton inquired if Ms. Giuriato was aware of other counties that have taken this collaborative social services approach. Ms. Giuriato stated she was not aware of any other counties, although, some counties have expressed an interest in utilizing these services as a model for their counties.

Ms. Vasquez-Camacho asked if the County received any state funds for this effort. Ms. Giuriato replied that it is solely a county funded program.

Dr. Cuevas asked if Monterey County received any funding from Medi-Cal for interpreter services. Ms. Giuriato responded that Medi-Cal reimburses for staff time but not interpreter services.

Director Hamilton asked Ms. Giuriato if welfare-to-work funds were available for interpreters. Ms. Giuriato responded that accessing federal funds are challenging and must be followed by the proper guidelines.

Rudy Gonzalves, of the United Farm Workers, provided a brief history of the challenge farm workers face in accessing health care. Mr. Gonzalves introduced Mr. Juan Moran, a United Farm Worker outreach worker to further relate how this issue impacts farm workers.

Mr. Moran spoke in Spanish and was assisted by interpreter Sally Gutierrez with the English translation.

Mr. Moran stated that farm workers faced several problems with accessing health care. He stated that the service hours conflicted with the field workers' hours and services are not provided after hours and weekends. He related he is aware of many farm workers who don't have adequate health insurance. Mr. Moran offered suggestions that could improve migrant workers access to health care. He recommended that clinics extend their evening hours and include weekends. He also stated there was a need for more physicians and dentists to work in rural areas to address the shortage of culturally and competent physicians and dentists to serve the patients.

Dr. Marc Tunzi, Program Director of the Natividad Medical Center's Residency Program, related that a number of comments made thus far don't apply to individuals with multi-cultural backgrounds, but apply to individuals who don't have the money, resources, and the time to access health services. Dr. Tunzi expressed concern for the proposal that would allow physicians and dentists from Mexico to practice in the U.S. Dr. Tunzi stated he has foreign practicing physicians in Natividad's residency program who have done fairly well, but were well trained in the U.S. He indicated that physicians not trained in the US might not be an effective remedy to serve the patient needs. He also indicated that he had no antipathy for foreign-trained physicians, but the training received in foreign countries was not equivalent to the training received in the U.S. Dr. Tunzi cautioned that care must be taken so double standards are not created.

Director Hamilton asked if there was an opportunity to provide cross-training so that foreign educated physicians might continue their education and training in a California residency program that would expose American educated physicians to their language and cultural experiences.

Dr. Tunzi replied yes, that the U.S. has foreign-trained individuals already here that could foster and promote education to recruit individuals.

Ms. Iacino inquired of Dr. Tunzi if he felt that the residency slots in California were under utilized. Dr. Tunzi responded that California family practice residents is generally very well thought of in comparison to other parts of the country. Due to the demand, all of the residency slots are filled.

Ms. Vasquez-Camacho asked generally what geographic area the residents are from. Mr. Tunzi replied that the majority of the residents were from California.

Ilene Tremain, Public Affairs Director, Planned Parenthood in Monterey County. Ms. Tremain advised Planned Parenthood have four clinics in Monterey County. Ms. Tremain advised 95% of the clients were Latina and a major concern in providing health care was addressing cultural values. Planned Parenthood has developed a program that consists of a registered nurse and a bilingual coordinator that go to migrant camps, high schools, community centers, homeless shelters and affordable housing units. Doing this type of outreach has enabled them to provide health care to many in the community who would not otherwise receive care.

Director Hamilton asked if there were opportunities for Spanish speaking bilingual teenagers to volunteer their services to work for Planned Parenthood. Ms. Tremain replied there are issues of confidentiality and volunteers must be 18 years or older.

Ms. Tremain introduced Deanna Sanchez, who works for the Affordable Housing Project. Ms. Sanchez advised that the Affordable Housing Project provides clinical supplies, free contraceptives and clinic services after hours to meet the needs of teenagers in the community.

Director Hamilton asked how young adults became aware of the services that are available. Ms. Sanchez responded through flyers that are distributed in the community room.

Ms. Vasquez-Camacho asked how the parents in the community responded to the services provided. Ms. Sanchez responded that they have been receptive and they welcome any free services that enable their children to stay healthy without them having to take time out of their busy schedules to take them to the clinic.

Director Hamilton asked if the residents were concerned with the lack of Spanish speaking doctors and nurses at the Planned Parenthood clinics.

Ms. Tremain replied, a majority of the staff is bilingual and includes registered nurses, physician assistants and physicians. All are on-call to provide direction to the clinic staff. Ms. Tremain advised most of the practitioners are from Salinas and the Bay Area.

Director Hamilton encouraged that Planned Parenthood Services be replicated and thanked Ms. Tremain for her inspiring work in the community.

**Public Comment:**

Gloria Grivalva, Director for the Welcome Back Program, International Health Worker Assistance Center in Fresno advised that the Welcome Back center is funded through the California Endowment and sponsored through the local regional health occupational center. Ms. Grivalva related that the Welcome Back Center is currently in phase two of the implementation process and is scheduled to open in February 2002. The purpose of the center is to assist health workers educated in foreign countries who reside in California to receive the required training and certification to enable them to practice in California.

Kris Word stated she has twenty-five years of experience as a dental hygienist. She shared her perspective on the feasibility of the proposal to bring physicians and dentists from Mexico to work in medically underserved areas. Ms. Word advised she has been privy to faulty dental work performed by foreign dentists who were not trained properly. Ms. Word stated she does not support foreign-trained physicians and dentists to practice medicine in the U.S. unless they attend U.S. educational programs and are measured by the same standards. Ms. Word suggested raising the level of quality care by providing incentives, such as loan forgiveness for physicians and dentists who opt to participate and serve in the underserved communities.

Daniel Moreno reiterated that there is a lack of physicians and dentists who are bilingual and bicultural in Spanish. He stated that he believed the access problem has occurred because a number of Spanish speaking physicians have been denied licensure by the California Medical Board.

Dr. Baltierra shared her thoughts on the lack of physicians who are culturally and linguistically competent. She stated that although she was competent in these areas and willing to work in a medically underserved area, she has not been able to obtain a license to practice medicine in California.

**Adjournment:**

The Meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.